



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **MAYOR BALLARD ANNOUNCES URBAN GARDEN GROWTH IN CENTER TOWNSHIP**

*CITY ON ITS WAY TOWARD MEETING GOAL OF 50 GARDENS BY YEAR'S END WITH 35 GARDENS CONFIRMED*

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard today announced that Center Township is now home to 35 urban gardens, demonstrating the City of Indianapolis is well on its way toward meeting the goal of 50 gardens in Center Township by the end of 2011.

Mayor Ballard reported on the progress of the City's Urban Garden Challenge at a lot located at 2415 N. Rural St. in the Martindale Brightwood neighborhood that the Land Bank has designated for use as an urban garden. Organizers of the Living Well Urban Farm and gardening experts from Butler University and the Marion County Purdue Extension joined Mayor Ballard in discussing ways to expand urban gardening across Center Township.

"Last year, I challenged our community to create 50 urban gardens by the end of 2011," said Mayor Ballard. "Today I am proud to report that we have 35 gardens in place. Through access to lots, technical support and motivated volunteers, vacant lots and former sites of abandoned, unsalvageable homes that were once a dumping ground are being transformed into community assets."

The Urban Gardens program is a collaborative partnership between the Department of Metropolitan Development, the Indianapolis Land Bank and the Office of Sustainability that allows community groups and individuals to use Land Bank properties for growing healthy produce.

"We were thrilled to be among the first to secure a lot for urban farming from the City," said Sister Faizah Mawusi, one of the community organizers with Living Well Urban Farm. "Having this lot allows us to bring a sense of community and serves as a learning incubator for our neighbors."

Faizah and other urban garden pioneers in Indianapolis see urban gardens as an important component to meeting the need for healthy food in inner-city neighborhoods considered "food deserts" due to the lack of grocery stores. The City of Indianapolis considers urban gardens a top viable option for converting blighted land into sustainable, usable space that connects neighbors to build healthy lives together.

For more information about Mayor Ballard's Urban Garden Program, visit [www.sustainindy.org](http://www.sustainindy.org).

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